

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch honors the Honorable Hazel N. Dukes, President of the New York State Conference of NAACP Branches; the Honorable Mildred Roxborough of the NAACP National Development Department; the Honorable Laura D. Blackburne, Counsel for the New York State Conference of NAACP Branches & NAACP Special Contribution Fund; the Honorable Paula Brown Edmé of the NAACP National Development Department; the Honorable Gloria Benfield, Membership Chair for New York State Conference of NAACP Branches; and the Honorable Shirley Stewart Farmer, Co-Founder of the NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch. As a Life Member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, I am proud to join Mid-Manhattan Branch in saluting these NAACP Women of Excellence.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premiere advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors. The Mid-Manhattan Branch recently celebrated its 40th Anniversary since its founding in 1966.

In the mid 1960s a group of citizens, concerned that there was no NAACP Branch in the Mid-Manhattan area, met for several months to plan a branch. Over 500 letters co-signed by Roy Wilkins and Ralph Bunche, invited hopefully interested residents to a meeting at Freedom House (120 Wall Street, New York, NY).

For forty years, the Mid-Manhattan Branch has been an advocate for all its citizens in the struggle for civil rights and equality. Today, the Branch plays an active role in confronting the gaps and disparities in healthcare, economics, education funding, Criminal Justice, diversity in the Courts and in the Judiciary.

Their efforts continue in voter education, registration and mobilization, as well as youth development and enrichment programs. Today, the Mid-Manhattan Branch has over 600 members, with eight working Committees (Education, Health, Fundraising, Legal Redress, Membership, Civic Engagement, Veteran Affairs, and Youth Council).

A TRIBUTE TO DR. SONYA  
MKRYAN

**HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 19, 2009*

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Sonya Mkryan of Altadena, California. Every March we celebrate Women's History Month in recognition of the contributions and the sacrifices made by our nation's women. Accordingly it is my privilege to highlight Dr. Mkryan as a woman whose extraordinary efforts are vital to my district.

Sonya was born in Sanjak, the French mandate of Syria, and emigrated at age ten to Soviet Armenia with her parents and three siblings. By the time she travelled from Armenia to the United States with her husband and three children in 1979, she had obtained a PhD in Technical Studies and worked for two

decades as a scientist and researcher at the Armenian Academy of Sciences. Her first job in America was as a mechanical inspector for Robertshaw Industrial Products.

As an educator and geophysicist, Sonya has taught in the Pasadena Unified School District as a professor of physics at Polytechnic Institute. For the past twenty-three years she has contributed her knowledge and experience to the County of Los Angeles' Department of Public Social Services in hopes of serving society for the better.

A woman of multiple talents, Sonya is also an artist and a writer. Over the last twenty years she has held several solo shows and has actively participated in many group exhibitions. Aside from scientific articles published in the Russian, she has published six books of poetry and short stories: five in Armenian and the sixth in English. She is a member of the Armenian Writers Union of California and is an honorable member of the International Society of Poets.

Sonya's life story is a testament to the brilliant potential of this nation's women and her steadfast dedication and selfless service are an invaluable addition to the legacy of Women's History Month. With gratitude and admiration, I ask all Members of Congress to join me in honoring an extraordinary woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Dr. Sonya Mkryan.

CONGRESSIONAL TRIBUTE  
HONORING FAY SINKIN

**HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 19, 2009*

MR. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, on March 4, 2009, the world was bereft of a powerhouse environmentalist when Fay Sinkin passed away at the age of 90. Born in New York City, Fay came to San Antonio 66 years ago after marrying Bill Sinkin after he proposed on their first, blind date. Fay quickly made San Antonio her home, and the residents of the city will be forever grateful.

She joined the San Antonio Chapter of the League of Women Voters, serving as its president for several years, and was a tireless fighter for the equality of women and minorities. She was one of the first women in the city to sit on a jury, and she fought the mayor and the city council to improve the living conditions for San Antonio's Blacks and Hispanics.

The protection of the Edwards Aquifer would become her life's work. When Fay heard of the proposal to build a massive development which threatened the city's water supply, she took action. With her allies in the Edwards Aquifer Preservation Trust, she enlisted the assistance of the city's congressman, Henry B. Gonzalez, and set forth to protect her fellow citizens. The Government Canyon State Natural Area now stands where some saw only a chance at quick profit. The growth of San Antonio and the health of its citizens would not have been possible without the work of Fay Sinkin.

Fay and Bill Sinkin continued to work to improve the lives of San Antonians, Texans, and the entire country until the end of her days. Just this past January, she recalled the myriad

changes she had seen over six decades in the city, the improvements no one could have imagined when she first arrived, looked out over a land so different from any she had known and declared herself home.

San Antonio was Fay Sinkin's home for 66 years. The City feels a little emptier now, but we have all lived richer, better lives because of the life of Fay Sinkin. Her life may have ended, but her contributions will live on and generations shall enjoy the fruits of her labor.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BOB ETHERIDGE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 19, 2009*

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, due to an illness in my family, I was unable to be in attendance on the floor of the House on March 12, 2009, and unable to record my vote on H.R. 1262.

Had I been able to cast my vote on this bill I would have voted in strong support of the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009. H.R. 1262 is a comprehensive bill that will result in a total investment in our nation's water infrastructure of \$18.7 billion over five years, this legislation will fund the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and provide \$13.8 billion in Federal grants over five years to the Clean Water SRF to provide low-interest loans to communities for wastewater infrastructure.

Our nation's wastewater infrastructure is deteriorating and in dire need of repair. In many regions of the country, sewer systems and water infrastructure facilities were built in a different era and for much smaller populations. Many water systems have reached the end of their useful life or have been completely overwhelmed from increased use. H.R. 1262 goes a long way towards renewing the federal commitment to addressing our nation's substantial needs for water infrastructure to ensure that communities across the country have safe drinking water and effective wastewater treatment facilities.

I am pleased that this legislation has passed the House and I only regret that I was not able to be present to cast my vote in support. In addition to voting "yes" on Rollcall No. 123, I would have voted "no" on Rollcall No. 122, against the Mack Amendment to the bill, which would have removed prevailing wage provisions from the bill. I also would have voted "yes" on Rollcall No. 124, H. Res. 224, supporting the designation of March 14, 2009 as Pi Day.

PUBLIC LANDS SERVICE CORPS  
ACT OF 2009

**HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 19, 2009*

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Public Lands Service Corps Act to expand an already successful program that employs and trains thousands of young people and helps repair and restore our public lands. I am delighted that my colleague, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman NICK RAHALL, has agreed to join me as an original cosponsor of this important bill.

In 1993, when the Public Lands Corps was established through the good work of our late colleague Bruce Vento of Minnesota, there were huge backlogs in labor-intensive work needed on national park lands, forests, wildlife refuges, historic sites and Indian lands.

Today, we still face those challenges and more: years of inadequate funding have put these agencies further behind on vital maintenance work while infrastructure continues to crumble. Despite the best efforts of our underfunded agencies, natural and cultural resources have been neglected, and in many places the effects of climate change are magnifying earlier problems such as fire risk, damage by insects and invasive species and fragmented habitat.

We have started to attack this problem with the recently passed stimulus legislation, but that is only a start. Much remains to be done on public lands.

The Public Lands Corps is built on a long and proud tradition of conservation service on Federal lands that extends back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Civilian Conservation Corps. That peace-time army, numbering some 3 million young Americans, planted trees, fought fires, maintained trails and built shelters across our nation. The Youth Conservation Corps has given hundreds of thousands of young people valuable skills and experience while undertaking valuable conservation work.

In fiscal year 2008 alone, over 4,000 young people spent countless hours on 289 projects at 111 national park units mending trails, cleaning up campgrounds, controlling erosion, restoring habitat, and other projects to repair and restore park lands, facilities and resources. That was in national parks alone; imagine what we could accomplish if more federal agencies harnessed that pool of talent and enthusiasm for the benefit of our public lands, waters, and coastal and marine systems.

My bill will amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to expand the authority of the Interior and Agriculture Departments (including such agencies as the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to provide service-learning opportunities on public lands; help restore the nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational and scenic resources; train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts; and promote the value of public service.

Additionally, the bill adds authority for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to participate in the program. NOAA, an agency of the Commerce Department, manages the National Marine Sanctuaries System, and with this new authority will be able to offer Corps members a chance to work in restoring coastal and marine systems along our oceans and the Great Lakes.

The bill will reinvigorate the Public Lands Corps programs by modernizing the scope of Corps projects to reflect new challenges, such as climate change; and adding incentives to attract new participants, especially from underrepresented populations.

The legislation will ensure that, during their service term, participants receive adequate training for the work they have been assigned, including agency-specific standards, principles

and practices. Language to ensure adequate housing, authorize participants in existing volunteer programs to contribute both as mentors and on Corps projects, expand the program for college and graduate students, and broaden preferential hire provisions is also included.

The bill would rename the corps as the Public Lands Service Corps, and remove the \$12 million authorization ceiling, paving the way for increased funding for this excellent program.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased that President Obama and Interior Secretary Salazar have made national service a priority, and I am delighted to be a strong supporter of the GIVE Act, which we are considering this week. I want to thank the gentleman from California, Chairman MILLER, for his very generous assistance in the drafting of the Public Lands Corps amendments I am introducing today.

I also want to thank the gentleman from West Virginia, Chairman RAHALL, the chairman of the other committee on which I am proud to serve, the Natural Resources Committee, for his support of this legislation. Other members have also indicated their interest in service-learning on public lands, and I look forward to working with them, and with members of the other body who have a long interest in the Public Lands Corps.

Madam Speaker, we know the tasks and challenges that confront our land and water management agencies are great. This bill will help us meet those challenges.

#### A TRIBUTE TO DR. MELINDA HSIA

#### HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Melinda Hsia of South Pasadena, California. Every March we celebrate Women's History Month in recognition of the contributions and the sacrifices made by our nation's women. Accordingly it is my privilege to highlight Dr. Hsia as a woman whose extraordinary efforts are vital to my district.

Born in San Francisco, Melinda graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a major in Bacteriology and received her Doctor of Pharmacy at the University of Southern California. She began to master the art of multi-tasking while working at the Glendale Adventist Medical Center for 16 years, when in addition to her medical pursuits, she obtained her real estate license and sold houses part-time. By the time her children, Andrew and Chloe, were born and her husband, Tom, retired, Melinda had become a veteran at juggling multiple roles. Outside of her volunteer efforts Melinda is an avid gardener and a pharmacist at Costco Alhambra where she counsels everyone from pediatric to elderly patients.

Melinda's children have inspired her community involvement year after year. She began as a PTA member at their elementary school, helping to coordinate talent shows, musical productions, and promotions. Once her children entered high school, Melinda became the South Pasadena Music Boosters Club President and an active member of several other committees which coordinate fundraisers and competitions to support athletic and school clubs. She is currently South Pasadena High

School's PTSA Vice President of Programs. In this capacity, Melinda coordinates speaker forums such as "Over-the-Counter Drugs and Teens" and the Developing Capable Young People series. In 2007 she received South Pasadena High School's PTSA Volunteer of the Year award.

In addition to her PTSA involvement, Melinda serves her community as repeat President of the South Pasadena Chinese American Club, which raises funds for local public schools and community projects. The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, Huntington Library's Chinese Garden, the South Pasadena Educational Foundation, and the Union Station Foundation's Adopt-A-Meal program have all benefitted from Melinda's exemplary philanthropic leadership. She has supplemented her already busy schedule with positions on South Pasadena School District's Real Estate and Budget Advisory Committees and sits on the Board of Directors for the City's Chamber of Commerce.

Melinda's handiwork adorns the entire South Pasadena community, whether as a refurbished classroom or as a floral centerpiece, and her selfless service is an invaluable addition to the legacy of Women's History Month. Her devotion has even created a new generation of volunteers: daughter Chloe was recently named a Bronze and Silver Congressional Award Medalist. With gratitude and admiration, I ask all Members of Congress to join me in honoring an extraordinary woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Dr. Melinda Hsia.

#### IN HONOR OF EDWIN E. BLISS

#### HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American and community servant, Edwin E. Bliss of Carmel, California for his lifetime of achievements and service above self. Edwin is a highly respected long time resident of the Monterey Peninsula. All of us who have had the good fortune over the years to befriend him, know that Edwin always exhibits his core values of respect, truth, and goodness.

Edwin Earl Bliss was born in Ridgefield, Washington near Portland, Oregon on March 19, 1919. The son of a successful dairy rancher and respected school teacher, Edwin displayed uncommon leadership skills early and often. Editor in high school, fraternity president in college and manager of the Charlton Hotel in Cannes, France while serving as an Army officer during World War II, Edwin led others by example, humility and compassion.

After the war, Ed moved his small family from rural Washington State to quiet Carmel. Called back into the Army to serve in Korea he moved his wife and three children back to Washington to be near family and friends. Upon his release from the military, Ed returned his young excited family permanently back to the Monterey Peninsula.

Here Edwin lives the American dream, raising a wonderful family, building a beautiful home and selflessly serving his community. Edwin Bliss's sense of honesty and respect has guided and propelled him through a successful career in the insurance industry and